

Communications Interoperability Working Group
23 September 2003
Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 1300. There were no Public Comments. Introductions were made around the table. The minutes (both sets) of the 26 August 2003 meeting were reviewed. A motion, second and vote of approval was obtained on the minutes.

A report from the Training sub-committee was provided by several members of the sub-committee. Training sessions have been set for the local municipal Emergency Management Directors (EMD) and the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers (associated with a fire department) as well as remaining stragglers from the initial 800 MHz radio training sessions. There will be six (06) sessions all held at DPS HQ in Middletown. There will be 3 day sessions (9-11 AM) on 21 Oct, 23 Oct and 30 Oct. There will be three evening session (7-9 PM) on 20 Oct, 22 Oct and 27 Oct. Eric Fine, Mike Varney and Bob DiBella will conduct the training sessions with members from DPS. The DPS members will become responsible for conducting any additional training that may be needed in the future. Additional training packages with updates will need to be printed. Existing unused training packages can and will still be used even though they will not reflect the recent modifications. The printing cost will be paid by OEM out of the remaining DOJ FY 02 Equipment Grant. CTDHS will make the notification by letter/e-mail to all EMD and EMS personnel. OEM will insure that CTDHS has the EMD contact information. DPH (Gordon Shand) will insure that CTDHS gets the EMS contact information.

Control station training has been scheduled for 21, 24, 25 and 26 Nov. Two sessions have been scheduled for each day; one from 10-12 and the other from 1-3 PM. All sessions will be held at DPS HQ Middletown. DPS Dispatchers will conduct the training on a train the trainer basis for 2 members of each PSAP. Training materials are still being developed. CTDHS agreed to pay for the training materials for the Control Station training. CTDPS has already sent letters of notification to letters to all PSAPs concerning the control stations. The training dates still need to be conveyed once DPS receives contact information from all PSAPS. The Control Stations are fully functional/capable as both stand alone units and ready for integration into a console at the PSAP's expense. OEM will be using some FEMA grant money to provide an 800 MHz I-CALL/TAC Control Station to the municipal EOCs of the Millstone EPZ towns, the Millstone host communities and the original WMD First Priority jurisdictions (towns over 100K population). If possible these control stations would be added to the PSAP contract so that they would be covered under the same warranty, training and distribution plan.

The discussion turned to the need to establish a comprehensive communications strategy. The discussion centered on an article provided that described steps that could be take to improve communications interoperability. After discussion on the need and content of a comprehensive strategy, a sub-committee was formed and tasked with preparing a draft strategy. The sub-committee members are George Pohorilak (DPS), Bernie O'Donnell (DOIT), Bob DiBella (OEM), Paul Jakubson (CPCA), Gordon Shand (DPH), George

Carbone II (DOT), Chuck Beck (OEM), with representatives from CSP, CTDHS and the Fire Service to be named. Chief Jakubson will chair the sub-committee. **The first sub-committee meeting will be held at 1300 Wednesday 8 Oct 2003 at DPSHQ Middletown.** The strategy will provide leverage to obtain legislative support thus State funding for to continue upgrading the communications interoperability throughout the State. The Strategy will also help drive a regional approach to communications and perhaps enhance the Planning stipends DPS can offer.

Reports on the Bradley Airport FAA drill, the MMRS drill, the CREPC drill and the NBVF drill all held on Saturday 13 Sept 2003 were provided. The reports focused on the communications piece of each exercise. As with most exercises, problems were identified. Overall, the communications piece of each exercise went well and in some areas new capabilities were uncovered. Items worth mentioning:

- I-CALL/TAC was up within 4 seconds of request.
- DPS Message Center/Communications Center was responsive and innovative.
- Need to emphasize use of plain language vs acronyms.
- Need to continue to instruct on difference between direct and repeat mode.
- Massachusetts repeater was not a factor during the exercise.
- Suffolk and Nassau Counties do not routinely talk to each other. Neither could activate their respective I-CALL/TAC repeaters.
- Suffolk County radio operators were unfamiliar with DPS Message Center/Communications “handle”.
- State to State test of I-CALL/TAC system needs to be re-instituted.

There will be an opportunity to discuss the cross border issues with the neighboring State at upcoming meetings of Region 8 in October and Region 19 in December. If “special” meetings are deemed appropriate, George Pohorilak will arrange.

The next meeting has been scheduled for **1300 Tuesday 18 November 2003 at DPSHQ Middletown.**